

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05

LAB-04 SIL-01 EPA-01 OES-03 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

CEQ-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /073 W  
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R 211902Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8327

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 01036

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, DR, UK, US

SUBJECT: PLANNING FOR CONCORDE ENTRY DECISION

REF: STATE 10979

1. ALTHOUGH THE CONCORDE ISSUE IS NOT SO EMOTIONALLY-  
ENSNARED IN THE UK AS IT IS IN FRANCE, IT WOULD BE A  
SERIOUS MISTAKE TO UNDERESTIMATE THE BRITISH REACTION IF  
SECRETARY COLEMAN'S DECISION WERE TO GO AGAINST CONCORDE.  
THIS TELEGRAM SPECULATES ON BRITISH REACTION IN THE  
EVENT COLEMANS DECISION (A) BANS CONCORDE FROM U.S. OR  
(B) PERMITS LIMITED NUMBER OF FLIGHTS AT DULLES FOR  
LIMITED PERIOD TO TEST ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

2. TOTAL BAN ON CONCORDE. WE BELIEVE THAT ACTION BY  
THE ADMINISTRATION TO BAN CONCORDE FROM THE U.S. WOULD  
PROVOKE A SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEM FULL DIMENSIONS OF  
WHICH CANNOT BE ACCURATELY ESTIMATED BEFORE THE FACT.  
BRITISH THUS FAR HAVE DELIBERATELY PLAYED DOWN POSSIBILITY  
OF RETALIATION IN EVENT OF ADVERSE CONCORDE DECISION  
BECAUSE THEY FEEL DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES  
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WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. MINISTER OF STATE FOR

INDUSTRY, GERALD KAUFMAN, IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID:  
"THERE IS NO SENSE IN TELLING THE UMPIRE BEFORE HIS DECISION THAT YOU WON'T ACCEPT IT. BUT IF THERE IS AN ADVERSE DECISION THERE IS LIKELY TO BE UNIVERSAL PUBLIC PRESSURE AND WE MAY HAVE TO RESPOND IN SOME WAY." EVEN THOUGH BRITISH GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE LITTLE OR NO DESIRE TO ENGAGE U.S. IN BATTLE OVER CONCORDE ISSUE, DYNAMICS OF SITUATION CREATED BY AN ADVERSE DECISION COULD VERY EASILY FORCE SOME KIND OF OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL RESPONSE FROM BRITISH. TRADE UNIONS HAVE ALREADY THREATENED ACTION AGAINST U.S. AND IF THIS OR OTHER MOVES LED TO COUNTERACTION IN U.S., SITUATION COULD QUICKLY DETERIORATE.

3. LIMITED APPROVAL. IN VIEW OF MANY BRITISH, PARTIAL APPROVAL WOULD REPRESENT A SORT OF NON-DECISION ONLY POSTPONING THE CRITICAL MOMENT WHEN LANDING RIGHTS AT KENNEDY AIRPORT ARE FINALLY DETERMINED. BECAUSE OF THIS, BRITISH WOULD PROBABLY FEEL OBLIGED OFFICIALLY TO EXPRESS DISAPPOINTMENT IF CONCORDE FLIGHTS ARE APPROVED ONLY FOR DULLES AND FOR EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD. ON OTHER HAND, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE BRITISH RATHER EXPECT THAT THIS IS WAY COLEMAN DECISION WILL TURN OUT. WHILE OBVIOUSLY BRITISH WOULD PREFER UNCONDITIONAL ALL-CLEAR FOR CONCORDE, THEY WOULD HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY IN TAKING VIGOROUS EXCEPTION TO LIMITED APPROVAL SINCE IT DOES DEFER FINAL DECISION. MOREOVER, SHARP REACTION WOULD BE OUT OF KEEPING WITH PAST STRATEGY OF UKG WHICH HAS BEEN TO GO ALONG WITH U.S. PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS, AS EXPENSIVE AND TIME-CONSUMING AS THEY MAY BE, RATHER THAN FORCE U.S. DECISION WHICH MIGHT THEN GO AGAINST CONCORDE.

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